

THE CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

THE QUESTION OF LIQUOR

Confession CLXX.

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Dick is perfectly furious with Jack. It seems that he has not turned over the \$2,500 to him yet, and he has decided to lend it to his father instead and let Master Jack look out for himself.

Dear old Dad is very angry, too, and he had to be persuaded to take Jack into the store—even as a clerk. And the worst of it all is that not even Mary has seen Jack for twenty-four hours.

Dick lost his temper while talking with me about it, and consequently he lost his sense of justice.

"If Jack hadn't been such a fool as to let the girl rope him into marriage, Dad and I could easily dispose of him," he said.

This remark fired me to retort: "Dick! you, who have seen that loving little woman over there at the hospital, can't by any possibility believe that she deliberately roped him into marriage! You know you are trying to find some excuse for Jack's thoughtlessness and general worthless behavior."

"But she ought not to have accepted him," answered Dick, rather weakly.

The idea of him saying this made me absolutely furious. "Oh, of course not! She should have either given herself to him without marriage or else denied her love and what she thought was her chance of happiness, so that when the time came for him to make an all-around fool of himself he could get off from paying the penalty he so richly deserves.

"Dick, you still have that inborn masculine idea that a woman is the one who must make the sacrifices—who must deny not only your desires, but her own.

"If Mary had not married Jack, you would have called her a 'hussy' and

said she helped him on his downward course; and now, because she did marry him, you say that she inveigled him into it."

"Here! here! you red-headed spit-fire!" said Dick, with a laugh, as he pulled me over to him and kissed me. "Nobody need say that you don't stick up for your sex. Why—what makes you draw away from me in that way? Don't you want to kiss me?" he asked.

"Not when you have been drinking, Dick," I answered.

He had the grace to blush, and then he frowned as he said: "My dear, I had only a cocktail with Bill Tenney and Jim Edie as I came up. You are not going to be so narrow as to object to one cocktail, are you?"

"Is that absolutely true, Dick?"

"Well—you see—I asked Bill and Jim to go in and have a cocktail; and then Jim said we must have one with him; and after that Bill would not let us go without one on him."

"Dick, I do most thoroughly object to three cocktails, and I object absolutely to this senseless American custom of 'treating.' I think the greatest temperance reform that could be brought about would be to make it a law that every man must pay for his own drinks.

"Oh, Dick! don't you know that you can have just as much fun without muddling your brain with alcohol? I don't believe any man with three cocktails in his stomach and their alcohol fumes rising to his brain has the right outlook in life. I can see now why you were not right when speaking of Mary."

"Don't be foolish, Margie," said Dick with a troubled laugh. "Any one would think, to hear you talk, that you were afraid I would be a drunkard."

"I am," I replied—to his evident horror.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)